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NEWS RELEASE



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Youth Success Initiative Budget Rollout
Fact Sheet

Overview

The Youth Success Initiative will provide \$6 million in funds to foster innovative approaches to invest in the youth of Alaska. The goals of the program are to provide mechanisms where young Alaskans can realize their full potential by offering them hope, opportunity, and a safe environment. Governor Murkowski will include the Youth Success Initiative in his FY07 budget proposal, which will be unveiled in December.

The program is expected to impact thousands of youth in Alaska who are at risk of substance abuse, suicide, or engaging in criminal behavior, by providing them alternatives, productive activities, good role models and appropriate mentors. Specifically, the investment is targeted to reduce Alaska's high rates of substance abuse and suicide among youth.

The Youth Success Initiative will invest funds in programs proposed by statewide non-profit organizations that have a solid record of success with adolescents and that have proven results and outcomes measures. In the summer 2005, DHSS conducted a competitive process that helped identify four non-profit entities best suited for the Youth Success Initiative:

Boys and Girls Club of Alaska

In Alaska, no other youth agency has reached as far and wide with age and gender appropriate prevention programs as Boys & Girls Clubs (B&GC). B&GC operates 41 clubhouses from Barrow to Metlakatla which serve over 30,000 youth. Affiliated with the Boys & Girls Club of America, B&GC has operated in Alaska for 40 years, with special emphasis on youths from low-income families. Their mission is to empower and inspire the diverse youth of Alaska to realize their full potential by offering them hope, opportunity, and a safe environment in which to grow. B&GC's proposal features alcohol, drug and early sex prevention programs, family preservation programs, work readiness and entrepreneurial incentives, in-crisis and at-risk youth suicide prevention programs, and establishment of five new clubhouses in targeted communities.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Big Brothers/Big Sisters mission is providing a caring adult role model in the life of every child and youth in need throughout Alaska. Last year through their Alaska Mentoring Demonstration Project (AMDP), Big Brothers/Big Sisters matched 497 children in one-to-one mentoring relationships in 30 rural

communities, and 1,000 children in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. AMDP is a collaboration with the National Senior Service Corps, Boys & Girls Clubs, regional Native non-profit organizations, tribal councils and school districts. Big Brothers/Big Sisters proposes to expand AMDP and continue work towards its 3-5 year plan to reach full sustainability for the program.

Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP)

Rural Alaska Community Action Program's comprehensive community development programs have utilized a holistic approach to meeting rural communities' needs since 1965. From RurAL Cap's headquarters in Anchorage, the organization serves over 100 communities through a variety of programs. Their mission is building "healthy people, sustainable communities, and vibrant cultures" across Alaska. RurAL Cap proposes to continue establishing and operating their AmeriCorps team, which has recruited 2,834 community volunteers and has involved more than 3,000 youth in healthy activities hosted by AmeriCorps members.

Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB)

The Alaska Association of School Boards launched Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE) in the late 1990s to engage more adults in communities throughout Alaska in helping kids succeed. Because 53 of Alaska's 54 school districts are active AASB members, the organization is in a unique and strong position to partner with DHSS on a statewide Youth Success Initiative. AASB has a large number of successful partnerships with respected youth-based organizations throughout the state, from early childhood to post-secondary levels, and from schools to a wide variety of community organizations.

As the process proceeds, each organization will develop specific proposals and outcomes to achieve success in any of the following areas:

- Alcohol, drug abuse prevention programs. These activities could take many forms, but one model is to use small group activities designed to increase participant's resiliency and strengthen leadership skills.
- Encourage healthy lifestyles, promote positive behavior. There are many models for these activities, including Passport to Manhood and SMART Girls.
- Suicide prevention. Implement activities and interventions that work to prevent suicide.
- Job ready, work preparedness. Provide adolescents with the skills to secure employment and to be successful in the world of work.
- Establish new clubhouses or programs throughout the state.

These programs are expected to produce measurable outcomes, such as:

- Thousands of Alaska youth will gain skills to help them succeed in life and work.
- Suicide attempts and the suicide rate will be reduced.
- Underage drinking rates will be reduced.
- Teen pregnancy rates in Alaska will be reduced.
- Thousands of teenagers will succeed in getting jobs in local labor markets.